

VEHICLE COMPARTMENT RADIO LAN SYSTEM

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

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This application claims benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to Japanese Patent Application No.2000-35589, filed on February 14, 2000, the entire contents of which are incorporated by reference herein.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

15 The present invention relates to a vehicle compartment radio LAN system and more particularly to a vehicle compartment radio LAN system which enables communication between terminals provided on different seat rows by providing each seat row with a repeater.

20 2. Description of the Related Art

In a conventional vehicle compartment radio LAN system, a radio terminal is mounted in front of a front seat such as dash board so as to communicate with another terminal installed in a front seat by radio.

25 In a conventional radio LAN system in office room or the like, as shown in Fig.1, repeaters 102a, 102b, 102c connected to a wired LAN 101 are mounted on the ceiling, so that terminals 103a, 103b, 103c communicate with the repeaters mounted vertically above them. That is, it is so constructed
30 that the terminal 103a communicates with the repeater 102a, the terminal 103b communicates with the repeater 102b and the terminal 103c communicates with the repeater 102c.

However, if the radio terminal is just mounted in front of the front seat like in the aforementioned conventional radio
35 LAN system, the seats turn to a shielding object. As a result, a terminal brought into a second seat or third seat cannot

communicate with the terminal in front of the front seat, which is a conventional problem to be solved.

Further, there is another problem that radio communication cannot be carried out between terminals in each seat row, such as in the gap between the front seat and the second seat or in the gap between the second and the third seat.

In the indoor radio LAN system, a sufficient space can be secured vertically above the terminal like in office, so that there is no possibility that any shielding object may enter between the repeater and terminal. Therefore, radio communication is secured continuously in an environment in which the terminal or shielding object is semi-fixed. However, there is such a problem that radio communication cannot be carried out continuously between the terminal and repeater under such an environment in which the terminal and shielding object may be moved as vehicle compartment and factory.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, the present invention has been achieved in views of the above described problems and therefore, an object of the invention is to provide a vehicle compartment radio LAN system allowing communication between terminals installed in different seat rows and further allowing continuous communication even under such an environment in which no sufficient space can be secured and a terminal or a shielding object may be moved as a vehicle compartment.

To achieve the above object, according to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a vehicle compartment radio LAN system for communicating with a terminal installed in vehicle compartment through a repeater by radio wherein each repeater is mounted in front of each seat row.

According to the present invention, communication is enabled between terminals installed in different seat rows.

Further, according to another aspect of the present

invention, there is provided a vehicle compartment radio LAN system for communicating with a terminal installed in vehicle compartment through a repeater by radio wherein plural repeaters are mounted for each seat row at a position allowing
5 radio communication with a terminal installed in each seat row and radio communication is carried out by selecting a repeater securing an optimum communication state from the plural repeaters.

According to the present invention, continuous radio
10 communication is allowed even under such an environment in which no sufficient space can be secured and a terminal or shielding object may be moved as the vehicle compartment.

The nature, principle and utility of the invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description
15 when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the accompanying drawings:

20 Fig.1 is a diagram for explaining a conventional indoor radio LAN system;

Fig.2 is a perspective view showing a first installation example of a first embodiment of a vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the present invention;

25 Figs.3A, 3B are a side view and a plan view of the first installation example of the first embodiment of the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the present invention;

Fig.4 is a diagram for explaining communication by a repeater in the vehicle compartment radio LAN system shown
30 in Fig.2;

Fig.5 is a perspective view showing a second installation example of the first embodiment of the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the present invention;

Fig.6 is a perspective view showing a third installation
35 example of the first embodiment of the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the present invention;

Fig.7 is a diagram for explaining communication by a repeater in the vehicle compartment radio LAN system shown in Figs.5, 6;

5 Fig.8 is a perspective view showing a structure of a second embodiment of the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the present invention;

Fig.9 is a diagram for explaining a structure of the repeater shown in Fig.8;

10 Fig.10 is a perspective view showing a first installation example of the second embodiment of the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the present invention;

Fig.11 is a diagram for explaining communication by a repeater in the vehicle compartment radio LAN system shown in Fig.10;

15 Fig.12 is a perspective view showing a second installation example of the second embodiment of the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the present invention;

20 Fig.13 is a perspective view showing a third installation example of the second embodiment of the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the present invention; and

Fig.14 is a diagram for explaining communication by a repeater in the vehicle compartment radio LAN system shown in Fig.13.

25 DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Hereinafter, an example of installation of the repeater according to the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the first embodiment will be described with reference to the
30 accompanying drawings.

Fig.2 is a perspective view showing a first installation example. Figs.3A, 3B are a side view and a plan view of the first installation example. As shown in Fig.2 and Figs.3A, 3B, a repeater R1 is mounted on a dash board in front of the
35 front seat. A repeater R2 is mounted on the back of the front seat (the driver's seat in Fig.2) just in front of a second

seat and a repeater R3 is mounted on the back of the second seat just in front of a third seat.

Therefore, as shown in Fig.4, a terminal installed in the front seat is capable of communicating with the repeater R1 and a terminal installed in the second seat is capable of communicating with the repeater R2. Further, a terminal installed in the third seat is capable of communicating with the repeater R3.

Fig.5 is a perspective view showing a second installation example. As shown in Fig.5, the repeater R1 is mounted on the dash board in front of the front seat, the repeater R2 is mounted on a ceiling in front of the second seat and the repeater R3 is mounted on the ceiling in front of the third seat.

Further, Fig.6 is a perspective view showing a third installation example. As shown in Fig.6, the repeater R1 is mounted on a front pillar in front of the front seat, the repeater R2 is mounted on a front end of a drip line in front of the second seat and the repeater R3 is mounted on a rear end of the drip line in front of the third seat.

In the second and third installation examples, as shown in Fig.7, a terminal placed on the front seat is capable of communicating with the repeater R1, a terminal placed on the second seat is capable of communicating with the repeater R2 and a terminal placed on the third seat is capable of communicating with the repeater R3.

Because as shown in each installation example described above, the repeater is mounted in front of each seat, the repeater is never shielded by any seat so that it is capable of communicating with a terminal brought into any seat row. Further, terminals existing in different seat rows are capable of communicating with each other.

Further, by installing the repeater R1 in front of the front seat, the repeater R1 is capable of communicating with a navigation system, audio system or the like (not shown) mounted on console easily. By mounting the repeater R3 in

front of the third seat, the repeater R3 is capable of communicating with a back camera (not shown) provided on a rear portion of a vehicle. Further, the repeater may be connected to a CD changer, DVD changer, digital TV monitor or the like (not shown) provided in trunk through wire so that it is capable of communicating therewith.

In the above described installation examples, it is assumed that the repeaters R1, R2, R3 are mounted in such a manner that they are capable of communicating with each other securely irrespective of radio communication or wired communication. Further, the quantity of the repeaters is not limited to three, but may be increased as the quantity of seat rows is increased like in bus. Conversely, the quantity of the repeaters may be decreased if that of the seat rows is decreased.

Further, although in the above described installation example, the repeater R1 is mounted on the dash board or front pillar in front of the front seat, it is not restricted to these positions, but the repeater may be mounted on any place in front of the front seat such as rearview mirror and console if it is capable of communicating by radio.

Likewise, the repeaters R2, R3 may be also mounted at any place in front of the second seat and third seat respectively if each of them is capable of communicating by radio. For example, they may be mounted on a bottom of each of the second seat and third seat, floor or the like.

Further, the installation examples shown in Figs.2, 5, 6 may be combined with each other.

Although the first embodiment has been described about a case where the repeaters are mounted on a vehicle, this embodiment may be applied to conveyance having seats such as airplane and ship.

Next, a vehicle compartment radio LAN system of a second embodiment will be described with reference to Fig.8.

As shown in Fig.8, the vehicle compartment radio LAN system 1 of this embodiment is comprised of plural repeaters

R1, R2, R3, which communicate by radio with plural terminals (N1, ... N7) installed in or brought into the vehicle compartment.

The vehicle compartment radio LAN system 1 shown in Fig. 8 is indicated about a case where the three repeaters R1, R2, R3 are provided. These repeaters R1, R2, R3 cover all region having a possibility that any terminal may exist and are installed at each position having a lowest possibility that electronic wave sent from the terminal may be interrupted. Further, it is assumed that the repeaters R1, R2, R3 are mounted in such a manner capable of communicating securely irrespective of radio communication or wired communication and the repeater R1 is connected to the wired LAN 2.

The vehicle compartment radio LAN system does not communicate with a repeater located most nearby but selects a repeater securing an optimum communication state from plural repeaters.

For example, Fig. 8 indicates a case where seven terminals are available. Although terminals N4, N5, N6, N7 communicate with repeaters R3, R1, R2, R3 located most nearby respectively, terminals N1, N2, N3 do not communicate with repeaters located most nearby but repeaters securing an optimum communication state respectively. This reason can be considered to be that any shielding object exists between the repeater R2 and the terminal N1 and between the repeater R2 and the terminal N3.

To select a repeater securing such an optimum communication state, it is permissible to collect information about reception condition (antenna power, bit error) of electronic wave between each repeater and each terminal at a single repeater which serves as a master repeater and then select a repeater securing an optimum communication state. Alternatively, it is also permissible for each terminal to send a reception condition detecting request to respective repeaters in succession and receive an echo signal about a communication state detected corresponding to the detection request in order to select a repeater securing an optimum

communication state therewith.

A hardware structure of each of the repeaters R1, R2, R3 will be described with reference to Fig.9.

As shown in Fig.9, each repeater comprises an antenna
5 21 for sending or receiving electronic wave, a transmitter
22 for transmitting electronic wave through this antenna 21,
a receiver 23 for receiving electronic wave through the antenna
21, a controller 24 for controlling the transmitter 22 and
receiver 23 and a clock generator 25 for generating clocks
10 for these units.

The transmitter 22 includes a transmission buffer 28
for holding transmission data of other repeaters sent from
a reception buffer 27 of the receiver 23 through a signal
processing portion 26 of the controller 24 and transmission
15 data sent from the transmitter, a modulating portion 29 for
modulating the transmission data and a transmitting portion
30 for transmitting the transmission data modulated by the
modulating portion 29.

The receiver 23 includes a receiving portion 31 for
20 receiving transmission data, a demodulating portion 32 for
demodulating the transmission data received by the receiving
portion 31 and a reception buffer 27 for holding transmission
data sent from the demodulating portion 32 and transmission
data sent from the transmission buffer 28 of the transmitter
25 22 through the signal processing portion 26 of the controller
24. Data received by the receiver 23 is also transmitted to
an antenna power detecting portion 33 and a bit error detecting
portion 34 and data held by the reception buffer 27 is sent
to other receivers and the transmission buffer 28.

30 The controller 24 comprises a signal processing portion
26 for carrying out signal processing such as attachment of
transmission data destination, sender's address and the like
and a controlling portion 35 for controlling the signal
processing portion 26, transmitter 22 and receiver 23 and
35 switching transmission and reception.

The controlling portion 35 includes a CPU for carrying

out various processings and a memory for storing an instruction for this processing. Instructions and timing restriction carried out by this control portion 35 are held by this memory and loaded onto the CPU as required for execution.

5 Next, an installation example of a repeater in the radio LAN system of the second embodiment will be described.

Fig.10 is a perspective view showing a first installation example. As shown in Fig.10, the repeater R1 is placed on a dash board in front of the front seat so as to communicate
10 with a terminal brought into the front seat.

A repeater R2 is mounted on the ceiling above the front seat to communicate with a terminal brought into the front seat and a terminal brought into a second seat. Likewise, a repeater R3 is mounted on the ceiling above the second seat
15 to communicate with a terminal brought into the second seat and a terminal brought into a third seat.

A repeater R4 is mounted on the ceiling in front of the third seat to communicate with a terminal brought into the third seat.

20 Consequently, as shown in Fig.11, a terminal installed in the front seat is capable of communicating with a repeater securing a better communication state of the repeater R1 or R2. A terminal installed in the second seat is capable of communicating with a repeater securing a better communication
25 state of the repeater R2 or R3. A terminal installed in the third seat is capable of communicating with a repeater securing a better communication state of the repeater R3 or R4.

Next, Fig.12 is a perspective view showing a second installation example. As shown in Fig.12, the repeater R1
30 is mounted on a front pillar in front of the front seat to communicate with a terminal brought into the front seat.

The repeater R2 is mounted on the drip line to the left above the front seat to communicate with a terminal brought into the front seat and a terminal brought into the second
35 seat. Likewise, the repeater R3 is mounted on the drip line to the left above the second seat to communicate with a terminal

brought into the second seat and a terminal brought into the third seat.

Further, the repeater R4 is mounted on the drip line to the left in front of the third seat to communicate with a terminal brought into the third seat.

As a result of the installation of the repeaters as shown in Fig.12, a terminal installed in the front seat is capable of communication with a repeater securing a better communication state of the repeater R1 or R2 like the first embodiment. A terminal installed in the second seat is capable of communicating with a repeater securing a better communication state of the repeater R2 or R3. A terminal installed in the third seat is capable of communicating with a repeater securing a better communication state of the repeater R3 or R4.

As a third installation example, the repeaters may be mounted on the front pillars and drip lines of both the left and right sides as shown in Fig.13.

As shown in Fig.13, repeaters R1a, R1b are mounted on the front pillars in front of the front seat. Repeaters R2a, R2b are mounted on the drip lines in front of the second seat. Repeaters R3a, R3b are mounted on the drip lines in front of the third seat.

According to the third installation example, as shown in Fig.14, a terminal installed in the front seat is capable of communicating with a repeater securing a better communication state of the repeater R1a or R1b. A terminal installed in the second seat is capable of communicating with a repeater securing a better communication state of the repeater R2a or R2b. A terminal installed in the third seat is capable of communicating with a repeater securing a better communication state of the repeater R3a or R3b.

As shown in each installation example, plural repeaters are provided at a position allowing communication with a terminal installed in each seat row and a repeater securing a optimum communication state is selected from the plural

repeaters to carry out communication by radio. Consequently,
radio communication can be kept continuously even under such
an environment in which no sufficient space can be secured
and a terminal or shielding object may be moved as the vehicle
5 compartment.

Further, by mounting the repeater R1 in front of the
front seat, the repeater R1 is capable of communicating with
a navigation system, audio system or the like (not shown)
mounted on console easily. By mounting the repeater R3, R3b
10 or R4 on the third seat, the repeater R3 is capable of
communicating with a back camera (not shown) provided on a
rear portion of a vehicle. Further, the repeater may be
connected to a CD changer, DVD changer, digital TV monitor
or the like (not shown) provided in trunk through wire so that
15 it is capable of communicating therewith.

In the above described installation examples, it is
assumed that the repeaters R1, R2, R3, R3a, R3b, R4 are mounted
in such a manner that they are capable of communicating with
each other securely irrespective of radio communication or
20 wired communication. Further, the quantity of the repeaters
is not limited to four or six, but may be increased as the
quantity of seat rows is increased like in bus. Conversely,
the quantity of the repeaters may be decreased if that of the
seat rows is decreased.

Further, although in the above described installation
example, the repeater R1 is mounted on the dash board or front
pillar in front of the front seat, it is not restricted to
these positions, but the repeater may be mounted on any place
such as rearview mirror and console as long as it is capable
30 of communicating by radio.

Likewise, the repeaters R2, R3, R3a, R3b, R4 may be also
mounted at any place respectively if each of them is capable
of communicating by radio with a terminal installed in the
second seat or third seat.

Further, the installation examples shown in Figs.2, 5,
35 6, 10, 12 and 13 may be combined with each other.

Although the second embodiment has been described about a case where the repeaters are mounted on a vehicle, this embodiment may be applied to conveyance having seats such as airplane and ship.

5 As described above, according to the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the first embodiment of the present invention, communication can be carried out between terminals installed in different seat rows.

10 Further, the vehicle compartment radio LAN system of the second embodiment makes it possible to communicate continuously by radio even under such an environment in which no sufficient space can be secured and a terminal or shielding object is moved as vehicle compartment.

15 It should be understood that many modifications and adaptations of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art and it is intended to encompass such obvious modifications and changes in the scope of the claims appended hereto.